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ABSTRACT

In this speech, President Clinton asserts that educational enterprise is now more important than ever and that a candid assessment of it is needed. The American educational system faces unique challenges--a more diverse student population in terms of income, race, ethnicity, and background; fractured authority and financing; schools burdened by social problems; and a widespread attitude that the primary determinant of success and learning is either IQ or family circumstances instead of effort. Despite positive accomplishments in education, such as the governors' involvement and the Goals 2000 initiative, there are still significant barriers to meeting higher standards. The President made the following recommendations: (1) Standards should be accompanied by accountability--an assessment system with consequences; (2) the system should reward and demand higher standards of teachers; (3) schools should be held accountable for results; (4) the business community can help school districts reinvent their budgets; (5) the states should provide more options for parents, for example, more charter schools; (6) school safety must be a priority; (7) schools should be open longer; and (8) the business community can help make educational technology available to all classrooms. (LMI)

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White House Press Release

Remarks By The President At The National Governors Association Education Summit

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary
(Palisades, New York)

For Immediate Release March 27, 1996

Remarks By The President
At The National Governors Association **Education Summit**

Ibm Conference Center
Palisades, New York

12:25 P.M. Est

The President: Thank you very much, Governor Miller, Governor Thompson; Lou Gerstner -- thank you for hosting this terribly important event. To all of the governors and distinguished guests, **education** leaders and business leaders who are here, let me say that I am also delighted to be here with the Secretary of **Education**, Governor Dick Riley. I believe that he and Governor Hunt and Governor Branstad and I were actually there for -- when the "Nation At Risk" report was issued, as well as when the **Education Summit** was held by President Bush. I want to thank Secretary Riley for the work that he has done with the states and with **educators** all across the country. And I know that every one of you has worked with him, but I'm glad to have him here and he's been a wonderful partner for me, and I think for you. (Applause.)

This is an extraordinary meeting of America's business leaders and America's governors. I know some have raised some questions about it, but let me just say on the front end I think it is a very appropriate and a good thing to do, and I applaud those who organized it and those who have attended.

The governors, after all, have primary, indeed, constitutional responsibility for the conditions of our public schools. And the business leaders know well, perhaps better than any other single group in America, what the consequences of our failing to get the most out of our students and achieve real **educational** excellence will be for our nation.

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So I am very pleased to see you here, doing this, and I want to thank each and every one of you. I also think you have a better chance than perhaps anyone else, even in this season, to keep the question of **education** beyond partisanship, and to deal with it as an American challenge that all the American people must meet and must meet together.

All of you know very well that this is a time of a dramatic transformation in the United States. I'm not sure if any of us fully understands the true implications of the changes through which we are all living, and the responsibilities that those changes impose upon us. It is clear to most people that the dimensions of economic change now are the greatest that they have been since we moved from farm to factory and from rural areas to cities and towns 100 years ago.

In his book, "The Road From Here," Bill Gates says that the digital chip is leading us to the greatest transformation in communications in 500 years, since Gutenberg

printed the first Bible in Europe. If that is true, it is obvious beyond anyone's ability to argue, that the **educational** enterprise, which has always been central to the development of good citizens in America, as well as to a strong economy, is now more important than ever before.

That means that we need a candid assessment of what is right and what is wrong with our **educational** system and what we need to do. Your focus on standards, your focus on assessment, your focus on technology is all to the good. We know that many of our schools do a very good job, but some of them don't. We know that many of our teachers are great, but some don't measure up. We know that many of our communities are seizing the opportunities of the present and the future, but too many aren't.

And, most important, we know that -- after the emphasis on **education** which goes back at least until 1983 and the whole country and, to my native region, to the South, to the late '70s when we began to try to catch up economically with the rest of the country -- we know that while the schools and the students of this country are doing better than they were in 1984 and better than they were in 1983, when "The Nation At Risk" was issued, and in 1989 when the **Education Summit** was held at Charlottesville, most of them still are not meeting the standards that are necessary and adequate to the challenges of today. So that is really what we have to begin with.

Now, America has some interesting challenges that I think are somewhat unique to our country in this global environment in which **education** is important, and we might as well just sort of put them out there on the front end -- not that we can resolve them today. The first is that we have a far more diverse group of students in terms of income and race and ethnicity and background and, indeed, living conditions than almost any other great country in the world.

Second, we have a system in which both authority and financing is more fractured than in other countries, is typically the case. Third, we know that our schools are burdened by social problems, not of their making, which make the jobs of principals and teachers more difficult.

And, fourth, and I think most important of all, our country still has an attitude problem about **education** that I think we should resolve, that is even prior to the standards and assessment issue, and that is that too many people in the United States think that the primary determinant of success and learning is either Iq or family circumstances instead of effort. And I don't. And I don't think any of the research supports that.

So one of the things that I hope you will say is in a positive way that you believe all kids can learn, and in a stronger way that you believe that effort is more important than Iq or income -- given the right kind of **educational** opportunities, the right kind of expectations. It's often been said that Americans from time to time suffer from a revolution of rising expectations. This is one area where we need a revolution of rising expectations. We ought to all simply and forthrightly say that we believe that school is children's work and play; that it can be great joy, but that effort matters.

I see one of our business leaders here, a former state senator from Arkansas, Senator Joe Ford. His father was the head of our **educational** program in Arkansas for a long time. We had a lot of people in one-room schoolhouses, 40 and 50 and 60 years ago, reading simple readers who believed that effort was more important than Iq or income. They didn't know what Iq was. And we have got to change that. And governors, every governor and every business leader in this country can make a difference.

I'm no Einstein, and not everybody can do everything, but if you stack this up from one to the other, all the Americans together in order by Iq, you couldn't stick a straw between one person and the next. And you know it as well as I do. Most people can learn everything they need to know to be good citizens and successful participants in the American economy and in the global economy. And I believe that unless you can convince your constituents that that is the truth, that all of your efforts to raise standards and all of your efforts to have accountability through tests and other assessments will not be as successful as they ought to be. And I think, frankly, a lot of people, even in **education**, need to be reminded of that from time to time.

Now, let's get back to the good news. Thirty or 40 years ago, maybe even 20 years ago, no one could ever have conceived of a meeting like this taking place. Governors played little role in **education** until just a couple of decades ago. And business didn't regard it as their responsibility. In the late '70s and early '80s this whole wave began to sweep America. And one important, positive thing that ought never to be overlooked is that the business leadership of America and the governors of this country have been literally obsessed with **education** for a long time now. And that's a very good thing, because one of the problems with America is that we tend to be in the grip of serial enthusiasms. It's the hula hoop today and something else tomorrow. Boy, that dates me, doesn't it? (Laughter.)

In this country the governors have displayed a remarkable consistency of commitment to **education**. And at least since 1983, the business community has displayed that commitment. And I think it's fair to say that all of us have learned some things as we have gone along, which is what has brought you to

this point, that there is a -- you understand now, and I've heard Lou Gerstner talk about it in his, almost his mantra about standards -- that we understand that the next big step has to be to have some meaningful and appropriately high standards and then hold people accountable for them.

I think it's worth noting that the 1983 "Nation At Risk" report did do some good things. Almost every state in the country went back and revised its curriculum requirement. Many revised their class size requirements. Many did other things to upgrade teacher training or to increase college scholarships or to do a lot of other things.

In 1989 I was privileged to be in Charlottesville working with Governor Branstad and with Governor Campbell, primarily as we were trying to get all the governors together to develop the statement at the **Education Summit** with President Bush. And that was the first time there had ever been a bipartisan national consensus on **educational** goals.

The realization was in 1989 was that six years after a "Nation At Risk," all these extra requirements were being put into **education**, but nobody had focused on what the end game was. What did we want America to look like? It's worth saying that we wanted every child to show up for school ready to learn, that we wanted to be proficient in certain core courses and were willing to assess our students to see if we were, that we wanted to prepare our people for the world of work, that we wanted to be extra-good in math and science and to overcome our past deficiencies. All the things that were in those **educational** goals were worth saying.

Another thing that the Charlottesville **summit** did that I think is really worth emphasizing is that it defined for the first time, from the governors up, what the federal role in **education** ought to be and what it should not be. I went back this morning, just on the way up, and I read the Charlottesville statement about what the governors then unanimously voted that the federal role should be and what it should not be.

When I became President and I asked Dick Riley to become Secretary of **Education**, I said that our legislative agenda ought to be consistent, completely consistent with what the governors had said at Charlottesville. So, for example, the

governors said at Charlottesville, the federal government has a bigger responsibility to help people show up for school prepared to learn. So we emphasized things like more funds for Head Start and more investment in trying to improve the immunization rates of kids and other health indicators; and more responsibility for access to higher **education**, so we tried to reform the Student Loan Program and invest more money in Pell Grants and national service and things like that.

And then, more responsibility to give greater flexibility to the states in K-12 and to try to promote reform without defining how any of this should be done.

And so that's what Goals 2000 was about. We tried to have a system in which states and mostly local school districts could pursue world-class standards based on their own plans for grass-roots reform. And we overhauled the Elementary

and Secondary **Education** Act, an we redid Title I to do one thing that I think is very important: We took out of what was then in the law for Chapter One, which was lower **educational** expectations for poor children -- it was an outrage, and we took it out of the law. I don't believe that poor children should be expected to perform at lower levels than other children.

And Dick Riley, since he has been Secretary of **Education**, has cut federal regulations over states and local school districts by more than 50 percent. It seems to me that that is consistent with exactly what the governors said at Charlottesville they wanted done.

Now, the effort to have national standards, I think it's fair to say, has been less than successful. The history standards and the English standards effort did not succeed for reasons that have been well analyzed, although I'm not sure the debate was entirely worthless; I think the debate itself did some good.

But there are recommended standards that have been widely embraced, coming out of the math teachers, that most people think are quite good, and the preliminary indications for science are encouraging. And I want to say again, it would be wrong to say that there's been no progress since 1983. The number of young people taking core courses has jumped from 13 percent in '82, to 52 percent in '94. The national math and science scores are up a grade since 1983, half of all the four-year-olds now attend preschool, 86 percent of all our young people are completing high school. We're almost up to the 90 percent that was in the National **Education** Goals. That is progress.

But what we have learned since Charlottesville and what you are here to hammer home to America is that the overall levels of learning are not enough, and that there are still significant barriers in various schools to meeting higher standards.

I accept your premise; we can only do better with tougher standards and better assessment, and you should set the standards. I believe that is absolutely right. And that will be the lasting legacy of this conference. I also believe, along with Mr. Gerstner and the others who are here, that it's very important not only for businesses to speak out for reform, but for business leaders to be knowledgeable enough to know what reform to speak out for, and what to emphasize, and how to hammer home the case for higher standards, as well as how to help local school districts change some of the things that they are now doing so that they have a reasonable chance at meeting these standards.

Let me just go through now what I think we should do in challenging the country on standards for students, as well as

for teachers and schools. I suppose that I have spent more time in classrooms than any previous president, partly because I was a governor for 12 years, and partly because I still do it with some frequency. I believe the most important thing you can do is to have high expectations for students -- to make them believe they can learn, to tell them they're going to have to learn really difficult, challenging things, to assess whether they're learning or not, and to hold them accountable as well as to reward them.

Most children are very eager to learn. Those that aren't have probably been convinced they can't. We can do better with that. I believe that once you have high standards and high expectations, there is an unlimited number of things that can be done. But I also believe that there have to be consequences. I watched your panel last night, and I thought -- the moment of levity on the panel was when Al Shanker was asked, when I was teaching school and I would give students homework, they said "does it count?" That's the thing I remember about the panel last night. All of you remember, too. You laughed, right? (Laughter.) Does it count? And the truth is that in the world we're living in today, "does it count" has to mean something, particularly in places where there haven't been any standards for a long time.

So if the states are going to go back and raise standards so that you're not only trying to increase the enrollment in core courses, you're trying to make the core courses themselves mean more -- I heard Governor Hunt last night say he'd be willing to settle for reading and writing and math and science -- I think were the ones you said.

Once you have to -- if you're going to go back and define what's in those core courses and you're going to lift it up, you have to be willing, then, to hold the students accountable for whether they have achieved that or not. And again, another thing that Mr. Shanker said that I've always believed, we have always downgraded teaching to the test, but if you're going to know whether people learn what you expect them to know, then you have to test them on what you expect them to know.

So I believe that if you want the standards movement to work, first you have to do the hard work in deciding what it is you expect children to learn. But then you have to have an assessment system, however you design it, in your own best judgment at the state level, that says, no more social promotions, no more free passes. If you want people to learn, learning has to mean something. That's what I believe. I don't believe you can succeed unless you are prepared to have an assessment system with consequences.

In Arkansas in 1983 when we redid the **educational** standards, we had a very controversial requirement that young people pass the 8th grade tests to go on to high school. And not everybody passed it. And we let people take it more than once. I think it's fine to do that.

But even today, after 13 years, I think there are only five states in the country today which require a promotion for either grade to grade or school to school for its young people, to require tests for that. I believe that if you have meaningful standards that you have confidence in, that you believe if they're met your children will know what they need to know, you shouldn't be afraid to find out if they're learning it, and you shouldn't be deterred by people saying this is cruel, this is unfair, or whatever they say.

The worst thing you can do is send people all the way through school with a diploma they can't read. And you're not being unfair to people if you give them more than one chance, and if at the same time you improve the teaching and the operation of the schools in which they are. If you believe these

kids can learn, you have to give them a chance to demonstrate it. This is only a cruel, short-sided thing to do if you are convinced that there are limitations on what the American children can do. And I just don't believe that.

So that I think is the most important thing. I believe every state, if you're going to have meaningful standards, must require a test for children to move, let's say, from elementary to middle school, or from middle school to high school, or to have a full-meaning high school diploma. And I don't think they should measure just minimum competency. You should measure what you expect these standards to measure.

You know, when we instituted any kind of test at home, I was always criticized by the fact that the test wasn't hard enough. But I think it takes time to transform a system. And you may decide it takes time to transform a system. But you will never know whether your standards are being met unless you have some sort of measurement and have some sort of accountability. And while I believe they should be set by the states and the testing mechanism should be approved by the states, we shouldn't kid ourselves. Being promoted ought to mean more or less the same thing in Pasadena, California, that it does in Palisades, New York. In a global society, it ought to mean more or less the same thing.

I was always offended by suggestion that the kids who grew up in the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas, which is the poorest place in America, shouldn't have access to the same learning opportunities that other people should and couldn't learn. I don't believe that.

So I think the idea -- I heard the way Governor Engler characterized it last night, I thought was pretty good. You want a non-federal, national mechanism to sort of share this information so that you'll at least know how you're doing compared to one another. That's a good start. That's a good way to begin this. I also believe that we shouldn't ignore the progress that's been made by the Goals panel, since Governor Romer was first leader of that going through Governor Engler, and by the National Assessment on **Educational** Progress. I know a lot of you talked about that last night. They've done a lot of good things, and we can learn a lot from them. We don't have to reinvent the wheel here.

I also would like to go back and emphasize something I heard Governor Hunt say last night. I think we should begin with a concrete standard for reading and writing because the most troubling thing to me is that we've been through a decade in which math and science scores have risen and reading scores have stayed flat. Intel recently had to turn away hundreds of applicants because they lacked basic reading and writing skills.

Now, that will present you with an immediate problem because if you want to measure reading and writing, you will not be able just to have a multiple choice test which can be graded by a machine. You'll have to recognize that teachers do real work with kids when they teach them how to write, and you have to give them the time and support to do that. And then there has to be some way of evaluating that. I know that's harder and more expensive, but it really matters whether a child can read and write.

And for all the excitement about the computers in the schools -- and I am a big proponent of it -- I would note that when we started with a computer program in our school, and I believe when Governor Caper started in West Virginia, he started in the early grades for the precise purpose that technology should be used first to give children the proper grounding in basic skills. So I think that's quite important.

Secretary Riley says that every child should be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. And, parenthetically, that if that were the standard, I think we would be more successful in getting parents to read to their children every night, which would revolutionize the whole system of **education** anyway.

The second thing I think we have to do is to face the fact that if we want to have these standards for children, standards and tests, we have to have a system that rewards and inspires and demands higher standards of teachers. They, after all, do this work; the rest of us talk about it and they do it.

So that means that, first of all, you've got to get the most talented people in there. There's been a lot of talk about this for a decade now, but most states and school districts still need work on their certification rules. We should not bar qualified, even brilliant young people from becoming teachers. The Teach For America group in my home state did a wonderful job, and a lot of those young kids wind up staying and teaching, even though they can make two and three times as much money doing something else. Every state should, in my view, review that.

I also believe any time you're trying to hold teachers to higher standards they should be rewarded when they perform. I know that in South Carolina and Kentucky, if schools markedly improve their performance, they get bonuses and the teachers get the benefit. That's not a bad thing, that's a good thing, and we should have more of that.

I want to thank Governor Hunt for the work he's done on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. We had the first group of teachers who are board-certified in the White House not very long ago. Every state should have a system, in my opinion, for encouraging these teachers to become board-certified. The federal government doesn't have anything to do with that. Encourage these teachers to become board-certified because they have to demonstrate not only knowledge, but teaching skills. And when they achieve that level they should be rewarded. There should be extra rewards when they do that.

We also need a system that doesn't look the other way if a teacher is burned out or not performing up to standard. There ought to be a fair process for removing teachers who aren't competent, but the process also has to be much faster and far less costly than it is. I read the other day that in New York it can cost as much as $200,000 to dismiss a teacher who is incompetent. In Glen Ellen, Illinois, a school district spent $70,000 to dismiss a high school math teacher who couldn't do basic algebra and let the students sleep in class. That is wrong. We should do more to reward good teachers; we should have a system that is fair to teachers, but moves much more expeditiously and much more cheaply in holding teachers

accountable.

So states and school systems and teachers unions need to be working together to make it tougher to get licensed and recertified, easier and less costly to get teachers who can't teach out of the classrooms, and clearly set rewards for teachers who are performing, especially if they become board-certified, or in some state-defined way prove themselves excellent.

The third thing I think we have to do is to hold schools accountable for results. We have known now for a long time; we have no excuses for not doing -- we have known for a long time that the most important player in this drama besides the teachers and the students are the school principals, the building principals. And, yet, still, not every state has a system for holding the school districts accountable for having good principals in all these schools and then giving the principals the authority they need to do the job, getting out of their way and holding them accountable, both on the up side and the down side. To me, that is still the most important thing. Every school I go into, I can stay there about 30 minutes and tell you pretty much what the principal has done to establish a school culture, an atmosphere of learning, a system of accountability, a spirit of adventure, you can just feel it, and it's still the most important thing.

Secondly, the business community can do a lot of work with the governors to help these school districts reinvent their budgets, I think. There are still too many school districts spending way too much money on administration and too little money on **education** and instruction. And there needs to be some real effort put into that, that goes beyond rhetoric. I mean, I was given these statistics, which I assume are true because I had it vetted four different times -- I hate to use numbers -- if it is true that New York City spends $8,000 a student on **education**, but only $44 goes to books and other classroom materials, that's a disgrace, that's wrong. And that's true in a lot of other school districts.

We cannot ask the American people to spend more on **education** until we do a better job with the money we've got now. That's an area where I think the business community can make a major, major contribution. A lot of you have had to restructure your own operations, a lot of you have had to achieve far higher levels of productivity. If we can reduce the federal government by 200,000 people without undermining our essential mission, we can do a much better job in the school districts of the country.

Let me also say I think that we ought to encourage every state to do what most states are now doing, which is to provide more options for parents. You know, the terms of the public school choice legislation and the charter schools -- a lot of you have done a very good job with the charter schools. But I'm excited about the idea that **educators** and parents get to actually start schools, create and manage them and stay open only if they do a good job within the public school system. Every charter school I visited was an exciting place. Today, 21 of you allow charter schools. There are over 250 schools with are open, 100 more are going to open next year. Freed up from regulation and top-down bureaucracy, focusing on meeting higher standards. The schools have to be able to meet these standards if you impose them.

Secretary Riley has helped 11 states to start new schools, and in the balanced budget plan I submitted to Congress last week, there is $40 million in seed money to help start 3,000 more charter schools over the next five years, which would be a tenfold increase. That may become the order of the day. So I believe we need standards and accountability for students, for teachers and for schools.

Let me just mention two other things briefly. I don't believe you can possibly minimize -- and a lot of the governors I know have been in these schools -- you cannot minimize how irrelevant this discussion would seem to a teacher who doesn't feel safe walking the halls of his or her schools, or how utterly hopeless it seems to students who have to look over their shoulders when they're walking to and from school. So I believe that we have to work together to continue to make our schools safe and our students held to a reasonable standard of conduct, as well.

You know, we had a teacher in Washington last week who was mugged in a hallway by a gang of intruders -- not students, a gang of intruders who were doing drugs and didn't even belong on the school grounds. We have got to keep working on that. All the federal government can do is give resources and pass laws. That's another thing the business community can help with, district after district. This entire discussion we have had is completely academic unless there is a safe and a disciplined and a drug-free environment in these schools. (Applause.)

We passed the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, the Gun-Free Schools Act. We supported random drug testing in schools. We have supported the character **education** movement. We've almost ended lawsuits over religious issues by the guidelines that Secretary Riley and the Attorney General issued, showing that our schools don't have to be religion-free zones. We have worked very hard to help our schools do their job here.

The next thing I hope we can do -- all of us -- in this regard, is to help to work our schools stay open longer. Our budget contains $14 million for helping people set up these community schools to stay open longer hours. But remember that 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon to 6:00 p.m. in the evening are the peak hours for juvenile crime, and all that comes back into the schools. So I think that's another thing we really need to look at. A lot of these schools do not have the resources today to stay open longer hours, but they would if they could.

And one of the primary targets I would have if I were a local leader trying to redo my district school budget is to reduce the amount spent on administration so that I could invest more money in keeping it open longer hours, especially for the latch-key kids and the other kids that are in trouble that don't have any other place to go. So that's something that I think is very important.

Finally, let me just echo what Governor Miller said about the technology. We did have a barn-raising in California, and we hooked up actually more than 20 percent of the classrooms to the Internet on a single day. But we need every classroom and every library and every school in America hooked up to the

Internet as quickly as possible. We set a goal as the year 2000; we could actually get there more quickly. I propose that in the budget, a $2 billion fund to help the communities who don't have the money to meet the challenge, but every community, every state in America, at least, has a high-tech community that could help get this done.

The Congress passed a very fine Telecommunications Act that I signed not very long ago which gives preferential treatment to people in isolated rural areas or inner-city areas for access to schools and hospitals. So the infrastructure, the framework is there.

Anything you can do to help do that, I think is good if the **educators** use the technology in the proper way. And I'll just close with this example. I was in the Union City School District in New Jersey not very long ago. That school district was about to be closed under the State of New Jersey's school bankruptcy law -- which I think, by the way, is very good, holding school districts accountable, and they can actually lose their ability to operate as an independent district in New Jersey and the state takes them over if they keep failing.

There are a lot of first-generation immigration children in that school, it was basically a poor school. Bell Atlantic went in and worked with others. They put computers in all the classrooms, they also put computer outlets in the homes of a lot of these parents. And you had -- I talked to a man who came here from El Salvador 10 years ago who is now E-mailing his child's principal and teacher to figure out how the kid's doing.

But the bottom line is, the dropout rate is now below the state average and the test scores are above the state average in an immigrant district of poor children, partly because of the technology and partly because the business community said, hey, you kids are important, and partly because the place has a

good principal and good teachers.

But I do think that the business community -- if you look at the technology as an instrument to achieve your higher standards and to infuse high expectations into the community and to give the kids the confidence they need that they can learn, then this technology issue is a very important one.

Well, that's what I hope we'll do. I think we ought to have the standards, you should set them. We'll support you however you want. But they won't work unless you're going to really see whether the standards are being met and unless there are consequences to those who meet and to those who don't. I think you have to reward the good teachers and get more good people in teaching, and that we have to facilitate the removal of those who aren't performing.

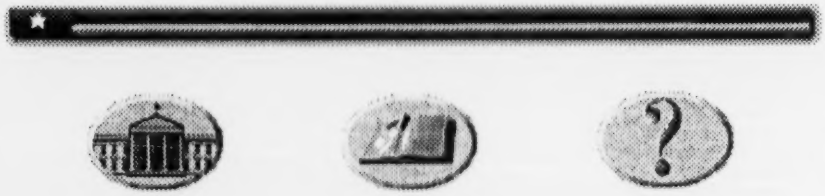
I think the schools need more authority and should be held more accountable. We've got to redo these central school budgets until we have squeezed down the overhead costs and put it back into **education**. And unless we have an environment in which there is safety and discipline, we won't succeed. And if we do have an environment in which the business community brings in more technology, we will succeed more quickly.

I believe that this meeting will prove historic. And again, let me say, I thank the governors and the business leaders who brought it about. In 1983, we said we've got a problem in our schools, we need to take tougher courses, we need to have other reforms. In 1989, we said we need to know where we're going, we need goals. Here in 1996, you're saying you can have all of the goals in the world, but unless somebody really has meaningful standards and a system of measuring whether you meet those standards, you won't achieve your goals. That is the enduring gift you have given to America's schoolchildren and to America's future.

The governors have to lead the way, the business community has to stay involved. Don't let anybody deter you and say you shouldn't be doing it. You can go back home and reach out to all the other people in the community because, in the end, what the teachers and the principals and, more importantly, even what the parents and the children do is what really counts. But we can get there together. We have to start now with what you're trying to do. We have to have high standards and high accountability. If you can achieve that, you have given a great gift to the future of this country.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

End 1:00 P.M. Est



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